

CSA update September 2018

Stakeholder engagement

At the end of August, we met with staff from different teams within a health board to discuss how the complaints handling procedure interacts with other reviews and processes in terms of timescales, recording and scope of the investigation. To enable wider discussion on how this is handled within other health board areas, we suggested raising the issue also at the next NHS complaint handlers network.

We had a tele-conference with another Ombudsman's office who have a strategic objective to improve frontline complaints handling within organisations they investigate. We provided information on the background to the establishment of the Complaints Standards Authority within SPSO – the [Crerar](#) and [Sinclair](#) Reports and the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 – as well as background to the development of the model CHPs, and the strong focus on the early resolution for complaints and 'getting it right first time'. We also gave details on the e-learning modules and resources that we have developed.

In early September, we presented to housing association staff and board members at the SFHA Governance Conference 2018. Our interactive workshop focussed on using complaints to create strong governance and asked delegates to consider how they would answer a checklist of questions about their organisation's complaints culture and governance arrangements, and seek assurance that the appropriate arrangements are in place.

Over the coming months, we will begin to review the model CHPs to ensure that they all reflect good practice and consistency in approach, while maintaining necessary sector specific differences. The first stage of this process will be to seek comments from all sectors around areas of the model CHPs that they feel require updating and/or further clarification. We will provide updates as this work progresses.

The Independent National Whistleblowing Officer

Our consultation on the draft National Whistleblowing Standards should be going live in the next few weeks. We will be posting all the relevant information on the SPSO website, and would welcome responses from anyone with an interest in this area.

We had a helpful visit to Glasgow University's School of Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing, to discuss our proposals for whistleblowing in the NHS. After receiving some positive feedback to our proposals, we will be taking these proposals forward to a wider group of medical school representatives in September, to further raise awareness of this work.

We also visited an NHS board, to see what their current whistleblowing arrangements look like, what challenges they face, how concerns are raised with them, and how they are being investigated. It was a very helpful visit, and highlighted how challenging some of these cases can be. We will be giving careful consideration to how we can best support Boards and other NHS service providers with the implementation of the National Whistleblowing Standards over the coming months.

Networks

Universities – this group met on Wednesday 22 August.

The group welcomed a representative from the college complaints handling network as part of cross-network information sharing. The representative provided details about the background to the college complaints network, the sector's journey with the implementation of

the CHP and beyond, and the development of a standardised set of complaints categories (which the SPSO now use to categorise the college cases that we receive). The representative also gave details about the complaints handling tool that was developed by the sector, and the annual complaints event which the group organises each year and is attended by delegates from various backgrounds, including complaints handling staff, and those working in quality and improvement.

We asked the group for their comments on what they believe would trigger the provision of support from SPSO and the circumstances where direct intervention may be required to help us develop an internal policy and procedure around this. We also provided high level year-to-date statistics for the sector, along with the SPSO update on our recent activity, including a survey around SPSO's visual identity, our draft British Sign Language Plan, and the open training course to be held on 19 September.

Local Government – this group met on Friday 7 September.

We provided the group with an update on our office move, as well as the SPSO update as above. We also updated the group on the annual letter issued in late August 2018 to local authority Chief Executives by the Ombudsman. To enable benchmarking within the sector and beyond, we advised the group that we would be hosting a page on our Valuing Complaints website with links to all local authority annual complaints reports. To this end, we ask all local authorities to provide us with a link to their annual complaints reports. These can be sent to csa@spsso.org.uk

This particular meeting was the first time that members were able to compare and contrast quarterly data; this exercise will continue each meeting going forward so as to allow members to carry out benchmarking activity with the most up-to-date complaints performance data. The group also explored the possibility of standardising complaints categories by function within their local authority – one local authority already does this and others have taken an action point to consider whether this is possible within their organisations. Members also took part in group discussions to provide initial views on our project to update and revise all model CHPs.

Colleges – this group met on Wednesday 12 September.

The main discussion point for this meeting was to finalise the agenda and break-out sessions for the annual college complaints event which is to be held at the end of October in Stirling. We also provided the group with an update on our office move, our SPSO update, and provided high level year-to-date statistics for the sector, as well as a brief summary of the complaints handling issues we saw in college cases in 2017-18.

Housing – date for next meeting TBC.